

Message Text

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15

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 EB-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 955

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L FREETOWN 0627

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PDIP, KS, SL, KN

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT STEVENS' COMMENTS ON ROK EMBASSY DIFFICULTIES

1. SUMMARY. DURING MEETING REQUESTED BY ME, PRESIDENT STEVENS REITERATED COMMITMENT TO ALLOW RESIDENT ROK AMBASSADOR. HE URGED CONTINUING PATIENCE OVER PACE OF GOSL DELIBERATIONS WHILE HE WORKED OUT THIS MATTER, AND PROMISED FURTHER ANSWER NEXT WEEK. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING CONVERSATION AFTERNOON APRIL 1 WITH PRESIDENT STEVENS, I RAISED MY CONCERN THAT SOME SLIPPAGE HAD OCCURRED IN POLICY OF GOSL ON ROK/DPRK MATTER. I TOLD PRESIDENT THAT, ALTHOUGH HE HAD ASSURED ME THAT ROK AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE COULD MOVE FREELY THROUGH FREETOWN AND BEGIN RENTING HOUSING AND OFFICE SPACE, SOME OFFICIALS OF HIS GOVERNMENT WERE INDICATING JUST THE OPPOSITE. I RECALLED THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD STATED EXPLICITLY THAT IT WAS NOT A MATTER OF WHETHER HE WOULD RECEIVE LEE'S CREDENTIALS, BUT RATHER WHEN. SOME NEWSPAPER COMMENTS AND OTHER RUMORS INDICATED THAT THE QUESTION OF WHETHER HAD NOT BEEN RESOLVED. I INDICATED THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS NO DOUBT AWARE THAT THERE WERE SIXTEEN OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE
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WORLD WHERE RESIDENT EMBASSIES OF BOTH ROK AND DPRK

EXISTED. FIVE OF THOSE COUNTRIES WERE IN AFRICA. FURTHERMORE HIS GOVERNMENT HAD ALREADY RECOGNIZED AN ROK EMBASSY IN FREETOWN. THERE HAD BEEN AN OFFICIAL EXCHANGE OF NOTES WITH THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE NAME OF THE ROK CHARGE HAD EVEN BEEN INCLUDED IN THE LAST DISTRIBUTED DIPLOMATIC LIST. AS THE PRESIDENT HAD REQUESTED, I HAD INFORMED MY GOVERNMENT OF HIS EARLIER COMMENTS. I NOW FELT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO KEEP MY GOVERNMENT INFORMED OF CURRENT EVENTS AND WONDERED IF THERE WERE ANY FURTHER UPDATING THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD LIKE TO MAKE.

3. THE PRESIDENT ASSURED ME THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO CHANGES FROM WHAT HE HAD TOLD ME TEN DAYS AGO. THE ROKS COULD MOVE FREELY AND RENT SPACE. HE FULLY INTENDED TO RECEIVE CREDENTIALS OF ROK AMBASSADOR. HE COULDN'T BE SPECIFIC AS TO TIMING NOW, AS SOME OF THE KEY ACTORS HAD BEEN OCCUPIED WITH OTHER THINGS AND HE HAD TO MAKE SOME CABINET CHANGES IN WAKE OF FOREIGN MINISTER LUKE'S RESIGNATION. THERE WERE BIG FESTIVITIES THIS COMING WEEKEND IN PORT LOKO WHERE THE VICE PRESIDENT'S SELF-HELP PROJECTS WILL BE INAUGURATED WITH MUCH FANFARE. BUT AFTER THAT, EARLY NEXT WEEK, THE PRESIDENT WOULD PROVIDE ME THE FINAL DETAILS ON THE PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS.

4. IN THIS CONTEXT I TOLD THE PRESIDENT THAT I HAD DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE LEE. HE HAD INFORMED ME THAT HIS COMING AS RESIDENT AMBASSADOR TO FREETOWN OBVIOUSLY MEANT THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS PREPARED NOT ONLY TO EXPAND ITS ECONOMIC INTERESTS HERE BUT ALSO TO DEVELOP A SIGNIFICANT FOREIGN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. THOUGH HE SAID NOTHING, THE PRESIDENT'S SMILE INDICATED THAT HE WAS PLEASED WITH THIS INFORMATION.

5. ABOVE TRANSMITTED TO LEE.

6. COMMENT: IN SPITE OF CONSTANT AND WIDE RANGING PRESSURES BY DPRK AND MORE SUBTLE INTEREST OF PRC
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OFFICIALS IN FREETOWN, IT APPEARS AS IF THINGS ARE ON TRACK. ONE NEVER KNOWS HOWEVER UNTIL THE LAST "T" IS CROSSED.
SAMUELS

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NNN

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